

DARLINGTON RURAL DISTRICT COUNCIL.

REPORT
OF THE
Rural District Council

for the year ending December 31st, 1920.

ROBERT H. MEIKLE, M.B., C.M.,
Medical Officer of Health.

DARLINGTON RURAL DISTRICT.

Population estimated at last Census	...	10,914
Population estimated in 1919		10,000
Area of District in Acres		44,400

*To the Chairman and Members of the
Darlington Rural District Council.*

Gentlemen,

I have the honour of submitting to you my twentieth Annual Report on the Vital Statistics and Sanitation of your District for the year ending December 31st, 1920.

I have taken my estimates from the estimated population of 1919, viz., 10,000, although at the census of 1911 the estimated population was 10,914, which included Cockerton and Harrowgate Hill estate. In 1915 the Borough of Darlington was extended, which included these two townships.

The Rural District, by its situation, is purely an Agricultural one, and the part of the district which stretches along the river Tees is considered one of the richest and most fertile in the County of Durham. The industries situated in the District, although few in number, are still of great importance in the commercial world, and amongst the most important are: The Locomotive Repairing Works at Brusselton, the Smelting Works at Dinsdale, and a Tannery at Sadberge.

The Housing problem in your District is still an important one, and as time goes on, the scarcity of houses makes itself more felt. It was thought by this year that the labour problem and the prices of material would have, somewhat, become more settled, and therefore encouraged private enterprise, but up to the present no advance has been made. I find it most perplexing and difficult to have the older and dilapidated houses put into habitable repair and one still finds cases of overcrowding.

In the Sanitary department your Inspector still shows energy and interest in his work.

The death rate for the year is 99, as compared with 143 in the previous year.

The birth rate is 235 as compared with 176 in the previous year, shewing an increase of 59.

Fifty-one cases of Infectious Diseases have been notified during the year, shewing the substantial decrease of 49 on the previous year.

Scarlet Fever being responsible for 28 cases.

The Infant Mortality shows a decided decrease.

The work of the Sanitary department still increases.

The Housing and Town Planning Act is progressing with its work.

Your Council is still continuing its gratuitous supply of Diphtheria Anti Toxin Serum.

The examination of specimens at the Bacteriological Laboratory, Newcastle, still continues and is much appreciated and taken advantage of.

Water Supplies and Scavenging have received much consideration during the year.

The Notification of Births' Act still proves its usefulness and advantages.

BIRTHS.

During the year 235 births (118 males and 117 females) have been registered in your District, giving a birth rate of 23·5 per 1,000 per annum, as compared with 176 births (89 males and 87 females) and a birth rate of 17·6 per 1,000 per annum.

The birth rate is the highest recorded for many years and no doubt can be accounted for by the marriages of younger people, and at the same time by the increase of wages in the younger men, who find that they have the more perceptible means of maintaining a home.

DEATHS.

During the year 99 deaths (54 males and 45 females) have been registered in your District, giving the extreme low death rate of 9·9 per 1,000 per annum, as compared with 143 (75 males and 68 females) and a death rate of 14·3 per 1,000 in 1919.

The death rate shows a decrease of 44. The decrease is very gratifying seeing that in the first two quarters of the year infectious and other diseases were very prevalent.

The following table gives the deaths which occurred without your District, although transferable to it, and are included in the 99 deaths.

Workhouse Infirmary, Darlington	...	4
Borough Hospital, Darlington	...	2
Greenbank Hospital, Darlington	...	1
County Lunatic Asylum, Sedgefield	...	3
Outside of Area (killed)	...	2
Barlby		1
		—
	Total	<u>13</u>

INFANTILE MORTALITY.

During the year 13 deaths have occurred under the age of one year, giving a death rate of 1·3 per 1,000 per annum, or a mortality rate of 55·2 per 1,000 births registered, as compared with 21 and a death rate of 2·1 per 1,000 and a mortality of 119·3 per 1,000 births registered.

The infant mortality shows a decrease of eight and is the lowest for a number of years. The Notification of Births' Act no doubt is responsible for a substantial part of the decrease. The younger mothers accepting and welcoming the advice of the Health Visitors.

The following parishes are responsible for the deaths under one year.

Heighington	...	...	...	1
Middleton St. George	...	...	...	2
Hurworth	...	...	...	2
Neasham	...	...	...	2
Aycliffe, Great	...	...	...	2
Haughton-le-Skerne	...	...	...	1
Redworth	...	...	...	1
High Coniscliffe	...	...	...	1
Sockburn	..	...	...	1
				—
		Total		<u>13</u>

The following table shows the ages at which deaths occurred under one year :—

Under one week	...	...	6
One week to two weeks	...	...	1
Three to four weeks	...	...	1
Four weeks and under three months	...	...	3
Three months and under six months	...	...	1
Six to nine months	...	...	1
Nine to twelve months	...	...	-
			—
Total			<u>13</u>

During the year one death was uncertified, and four certified by a Coroner after inquest, as compared with three deaths uncertified, and four certified by a Coroner in 1919.

Cancer claimed ten deaths as compared with eleven in 1919.

Heart Disease is responsible for no less than fifteen deaths giving a death rate of 1·5 per 1,000 as compared with thirteen deaths and a death rate of 1·3 per 1,000 in the previous year.

Tuberculosis claimed one death giving a mortality of ·1 per 1,000 per annum or a mortality of 250 in every 1,000 cases notified, as compared with eight deaths and a mortality of 1·3 per 1,000 in 1919.

This reduction is very gratifying, and no doubt the notifying and the more accurate and early diagnosis gets one in earlier communication with the case.

ZYMOTIC DISEASES.

The deaths from the seven chief Zymotic Diseases, viz., Smallpox, Scarlet Fever, Diphtheria, Whooping Cough, Enteric Fever, Measles and Diarrhoea, was two as compared with eight in 1919.

The Zymotic death rate for the year is .2 as compared with 8. per 1,000 in the previous year.

Whooping Cough is responsible for two deaths.

The distribution of deaths in point of season are as follows :—

	1920	1919		1920	1919
January ...	14	4	July ...	8	10
February ...	10	36	August ...	14	10
March ...	7	18	September	8	7
April ...	7	9	October ...	5	9
May ...	15	7	November	5	6
June ...	4	6	December	2	21
Totals	<u>57</u>	<u>80</u>	Totals	<u>42</u>	<u>63</u>

Nineteen deaths occurred above the age of 80 years, no less than four being above the age of 90 years, and one reaching the advanced age of 97 years.

The youngest registered being one hour.

Table shewing causes of death :—

Measles ...	...	—	Diarrhœa ...	...	—
Whooping Cough	...	2	Bright's Disease	...	1
Diphtheria ...	...	—	Diseases of Pregnancy		2
Smallpox ...	...	—	Congenital Debility	...	4
Influenza ...	...	1	Premature Birth	...	—
Pulmonary Tuberculosis		1	Violent Deaths	...	—
Other Tubercular Diseases	—		Suicide ...	...	—
Cancer ...	...	10	Accident ...	...	4
Meningitis ...	...	—	Other defined diseases	...	40
Organic Heart Disease	...	15	Senile Decay	...	—
Bronchitis ...	...	5			
Pneumonia ...	...	12			
Other Respiratory Diseases ...	...	2			
			Total		<u>99</u>

Death-Rate and Infant Mortality for each Parish, 1920.

Parish	Total Deaths	Infant Mortality	Census of 1911. Population	Death-rate per 1000	Death-rate from Zymotic Disease	Infant Mortality Death-rate
Haughton-le-Skerne	8	1	1349	5.9	..	.7
Archdeacon Newton	..	..	48	...	...	...
Aycliffe, Great	9	2	750	12.0	...	2.6
Barmpton	...	...	87	...	...	...
Blackwell	3	...	405	7.4	...	...
Brafferton	...	...	144	...	...	...
Burdon, Great	1	...	94	10.6	...	...
Coatham Mundeville	2	...	129	15.5	7.7	...
Coniscliffe, High	3	1	312	2.2	3.2	3.2
Coniscliffe, Low	...	...	149	...	...	...
Denton	...	...	96	...	...	...
Dinsdale, Low	1	...	252	...	...	...
Heighington	4	1	658	6.0	...	1.5
Houghton-le-Side	...	...	82	...	...	...
Hurworth	22	2	1452	15.1	...	1.3
Killerby	2	...	70	28.5	...	..
Middleton-St.-George	21	2	1531	13.0	...	1.3
Morton Palms	...	..	71	...	...	...
Neasham	6	2	336	18.1	...	6.0
Piercebridge	...	...	209	...	...	..
Redworth	7	1	451	15.5	...	2.2
Sadberge	5	...	412	12.1	...	...
School Aycliffe	..	...	21	...	..	...
Sockburn	1	1	61	16.3	...	16.3
Summerhouse	1	..	131	7.6	...	...
Walworth	1	...	147	6.8	...	...
Whessoe	2	...	368	5.4	...	...
Totals ..	99	13	9815	9.9	0.2	1.3

During the year Aycliffe and Piercebridge Schools were closed owing to Influenza, and before re-opening were thoroughly disinfected.

The number of workshops on the list is 38, being an addition of two, and the usual inspections were carried out.

The general work of the Food and Drugs Act has been carried out by the County Council. The work of the Health Department has received great attention during the year.

I should strongly advise the better distribution of water throughout the villages, where possible, stand pipes might be placed at convenient intervals, and if the village does not possess gravitation supply, I should suggest a supply maintained on the principle of the Aycliffe supply, where you have a pumping station and from there distribute to the village. I again suggest the adoption of public scavenging in all villages.

I again express my indebtedness to the Council and its officers for their ready and kind support in the discharge of my duties during the year.

I remain, yours obediently,

R. H. MEIKLE,

Medical Officer of Health.

Inspector's Report year ending December, 1920.

51 cases of Infectious Diseases were reported during the year, shewing a decrease on the previous year of 49.

22 of these cases were removed to the Darlington Borough Hospital as against nine during the year 1919.

Of the cases removed, sixteen were Scarlet Fever and six Diphtheria,

Notifications were made from the following Parishes:—

SCARLET FEVER, 28 cases.

Aycliffe	...	2	Middleton	...	3
Blackwell	...	6	Morton Palms	...	1
Hurworth	...	3	Neasham	...	1
Haughton	...	3	Whessoe	...	9

DIPHTHERIA, 9 cases.

Hurworth	...	4	Middleton	...	1
Haughton	...	2	Neasham	...	2

ERYSIPELAS, 3 cases.

Middleton	...	2	Sadberge	...	1
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LOBAR PNEUMONIA, 5 cases.

Middleton	...	3	Sadberge	...	2
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BRONCHO PNEUMONIA, 2 cases.

Hurworth	...	1	Middleton	...	1
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TUBERCULOSIS, 4 cases.

Blackwell	...	1	Middleton	...	1
Coniscliffe, Low	...	1	Sadberge	...	1

Blackwell.—Infectious Diseases notified from the parish were :

Scarlet Fever	...	6	Tuberculosis	...	1
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The Scarlet Fever cases were successfully treated at home, sufficient accommodation being available, the houses being situated in the open country.

Coniscliffe, Low.—Infectious Diseases notified from the parish were :—

Tuberculosis	...	1
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This case has had treatment at Sanatoria and reported upon discharge.

Haughton-le-Skerne.—Infectious Diseases notified from the parish :—

Scarlet Fever	...	3	Diphtheria	...	2
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Two Scarlet Fever cases, and two Diphtheria cases were successfully treated at the Borough Hospital and the other case at home.

Hurworth.—Infectious Diseases notified from the parish :—

Scarlet Fever	...	3	Diphtheria	...	4
Broncho Pneumonia		1			

All the Diphtheria cases and one Scarlet Fever case were removed immediately to Hospital, the remainder being treated successfully at home.

Middleton.—Infectious Diseases notified from the parish :—

Scarlet Fever	...	3	Lobar Pneumonia	...	3
Diphtheria	...	1	Tuberculosis	...	1
Broncho Pneumonia		1			

Morton Palms.—Infectious Diseases notified from the parish :—

Scarlet Fever	...	1
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Neasham.—Infectious Diseases notified from the parish :—

Scarlet Fever	...	1	Diphtheria	...	2
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These cases were removed to Hospital, excepting one case of Diphtheria. This being in a licensed public house, and the parent being unwilling to have the child removed to Hospital, the house was closed until the doctor certified the patient free from infection.

Sadberge.—Infectious Diseases notified from the parish :—

Erysipelas	...	1	Lobar Pneumonia	...	2
Tuberculosis	...	1			

The case of Tuberculosis unfortunately proved fatal.

Aycliffe.—Infectious Diseases notified from the parish ;—

Scarlet Fever	...	2
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Coniscliffe, Low.—Infectious Disease notified from the parish :

Tuberculosis	...	1
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Whessoe.—Infectious Disease notified from the parish :—

Scarlet Fever	...	9
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All these cases were immediately removed to Hospital and houses thoroughly disinfected.

DAIRIES AND COWSHEDS.

The Dairies and Cowsheds in the District have, on inspection, been found to be well kept and clean generally. Four milksellers were found to be doing business without being registered. On enquiry it was found to be through misunderstanding, and they have all been registered since.

Three new names were added to the list of Cowkeepers and Milksellers during the year.

CLOSURE OF SCHOOLS.

Owing to the prevalence of Influenza, the Schools at Aycliffe and Piercebridge were closed for a time. During the closure, both Schools were thoroughly disinfected.

FACTORY AND WORKSHOPS' ACT.

Two new names were added to the list of Workshops during the year, making the total on the register 38.

SLAUGHTER HOUSES.

A Slaughter House at Hurworth Place, occupied previous to the war by Mr. Park, but closed for three years, was allowed to be re-opened by Mr. Ripley on that gentlemen carrying out certain requirements.

ANTHRAX.

One case of Anthrax was reported from Sadberge during the year. The carcase was destroyed and premises disinfected. It was alleged that infection was caused by an overflow from the settling tank of Sadberge Tannery Limepit, flowing down a gutter running through land where the animal was accustomed to drink.

2nd May, 1921.

*To the Chairman and Members of
the Darlington Rural District Council.*

Gentlemen,

WATER SUPPLIES.

Samples of water taken for analysis from the public supplies at Aycliffe, Brafferton and Heighington. The analysts' observations on the samples from Aycliffe and Heighington state that they were of high degree of organic purity. The observations on the samples taken from the two public wells at Brafferton, state that there was contamination by impure surface water. In the latter case steps were taken to prevent all possible pollution from the surrounding ground.

At Coatham Mundeville, where the supply (though wholesome and plentiful) was from a dip well 210 yards from the houses, the inhabitants have arranged on their own initiative and without cost to the rates, for a piped supply to the houses by means of a windmill belonging to the owner of Coatham Hall. The new supply is from the same source as the dip well.

All water supplies in your District have continued plentiful during the past year.

SEWERAGE WORKS.

All house connections to the new sewerage system at Great Burdon have been made.

The flooding by surface water at Middleton St. George has been abated by the relaying of a large culvert which had become blocked. Trouble was experienced at the Fighting Cocks end of the Middleton St. George sewer which had become totally blocked and no provision for rodding had been made. Two manholes were put in to prevent a recurrence of the trouble. A nine inch sewer has been laid to the new housing scheme.

It was impossible to effect a sufficient flush of the sewers at Hurworth Place, due to leaking valves in the flushing chamber. New valves have been put in.

Complaint was made of smells from sewer gas in the village of Haughton-le-Skerne. This was remedied by thoroughly cleaning out all vent shafts which had become blocked by rust in the bends at the bottom of the shafts. In all cases rust pockets have been put in to prevent trouble in the future.

SEWAGE DISPOSAL.

Attention was drawn in the County Health Inspector's Report to the pollution to Carcut Beck from the Sadberge Disposal Works. This pollution can only be remedied by an improvement in the flow of the River Skerne, into which the Carcut Beck empties, as in wet seasons the water level in the Beck is above the level of the sewage in the tanks.

Complaint has been made of the pollution of a gutter on land belonging to the Ecclesiastical Commissioners from the overflow of the Heighington Sewage Tank. It is proposed to remedy this by the placing of a tank and grid at the mouth of a piped cutter and give assistance to the farmer in cleaning out the gutter.

Arrangements are being made to replace the filtering medium at Redworth Sewage Disposal Works by clinker from the Shildon Destructor Works.

WM. J. PALLISTER,
Sanitary Surveyor.